



Quarterly Report
SERBIA: POLITICAL PARTY BUILDING AND CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. 169-A-00-01-00115-00¹
April 1 to June 30, 2001

I. SUMMARY

This quarter began with the arrest of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević on domestic corruption charges and concluded with his extradition to the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Internal divisions emerged within the ruling Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) as Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić contended that Milošević's transfer to The Hague would bring sorely needed economic assistance while Yugoslav President Vojislav Koštunića questioned the political motivations of the international court and legal framework for extradition. These rifts within the coalition could hamper Serbia's political development and the pace of reform. With programs on political party development and local government, and cooperation with the Belgrade-based Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs has sought to assist democratic forces in Serbia as they work to rebuild political institutions in the aftermath of the Milošević regime.

In this quarter, NDI conducted the following activities:

Parliamentary / Citizen Outreach

- Conducted an assessment of the Serbian and Federal Yugoslav parliaments for future NDI programming;
- Facilitated the opening of eight DOS Contact Serbia constituency relations offices; and
- Conducted messaging and strategy sessions with governmental ministers, key chiefs of staff to government ministers and youth MPs in the Serbian parliament.

Political Party

- Hired ten new political party regional trainers to complement NDI's existing 12 trainers;
- Trained 589 DOS activists from 35 towns in local political party branch development;
- Conducted follow-up training on constituency outreach with more than 250 local councilors; and
- Trained more than 70 women local councilors and members of parliament on public speaking and other communications skills.

¹ During the period, NDI exhausted its grant monies from Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00 and began to spend its new monies under Cooperative Agreement No. 169-A-00-01-00115-00.

CeSID

- Conducted communications training, strategic planning exercises and fundraising for CeSID Regional Coordinators; and
- Helped to facilitate CeSID's monitoring of the Albanian parliamentary elections with NDI's former Albania domestic monitoring partner, the Society for Democratic Culture.

NDI achieved the following results this quarter:

- Eight DOS "Contact Serbia" offices provided constituency services.
- More than 30 city councilors engaged citizens' input through surveys after NDI's training in March on communications with citizens and a specific session on surveys.

II. BACKGROUND

The Democratic Opposition of Serbia completed its first 100 days in the Serbian government with an impressive record of reform legislation, but its most critical challenge came in deciding the status of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević. Faced with intense international pressure, particularly from the United States, to extradite Milošević to the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague (ICTY) in advance of a donors conference, members of government debated the legitimacy of the court, whether the former dictator should be first tried in Belgrade on corruption charges, and the legal ramifications involved in extraditing Yugoslav citizens.

Yugoslav President Vojislav Koštunića, citing his perceived bias of the Tribunal against Serbs, appeared reluctant to cooperate with the United Nations body but nevertheless began to take measures to establish a legal framework for extradition. The contentious process, complicated by Milošević allies in the Federal government and a pro-Milošević Constitutional Court, ended with an order from the Republic government to extradite Milošević to The Hague.

Yugoslav Prime Minister Zoran Zizic resigned his post in protest as he interpreted the transfer to be a breach of due process. While a government reshuffle is likely instead of new elections, the fate of the Yugoslav government and Federation remains in question.

Power struggles within DOS were made publicly apparent with the extradition process. Serbian Prime Minister Đinđić, eager to attract foreign investment at the donors conference, publicly rebuked Koštunića's constitutional sensibilities in bypassing the court system. After the transfer, Koštunića said that Đinđić had not informed him of the extradition plans, a claim denied by Đinđić. This rift in the coalition, while previously alleged, became publicly clear and may signal further splintering of DOS, as demonstrated by Koštunića's Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) pulling out of the DOS parliamentary group. As NDI begins its parliamentary programming, these internal coalition challenges, coupled with the sheer amount of reform required in Serbia will determine the program's shape.

Domestic disputes within the Albanian and Serbian communities in southern Serbia continued but with a measurable amount of positive progress. Deputy Premier Nebojsa Covic, chairperson of the Coordinating Committee for Southern Serbia, announced a complete amnesty

for any member of the Liberation Army of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedje (UCPBM) who turned in his or her weapon. The announcement followed a virtual rout of UCPBM forces in the village of Oraovac. Hundreds of rebels showed up at police and army checkpoints in the days following the agreement to surrender their weapons.

DOS has waged a different kind of war in southern Serbia. Covic says he wants to use the Yugoslav Army to build infrastructure in order for Albanians to see the army as “a force that builds as well as destroys.” Numerous international organizations will also fund construction projects in the region. Covic and the Minister of Ethnic and Minority Communities Rasim Ljajic traveled to meet with ordinary villagers to discuss the conflict.

NDI’s program in Serbia has been focused on building the overall institutional capacity of democratically oriented political parties and coalitions in order to conduct election-related activities and organize at the grassroots level. NDI has also worked with the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID) on conducting election and governmental monitoring activities. With the victory of democratic forces in late 2000, NDI has expanded its program to address challenges and opportunities in the areas of political party building, governance and citizen political participation.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Parliamentary Assessment

From May 16 to 19, 2001, NDI deployed an international team² to assess programming areas with the Serbian Republic Parliament with possible cross-over to the Federal and Vojvodina parliaments. The delegation reviewed the parliament’s political function to determine how the Institute can assist the legislature in becoming a representative political body. Meetings were held in Belgrade with DOS members of Serbian and Federal parliaments, government ministers, staff and NGO representatives and in Vojvodina with representatives of the Vojvodina Assembly. Key findings included the following:

- Communication between government and parliament does not occur on a formal basis. This is a central cause of frustration for members of parliament who are called upon to pass government-proposed legislation without adequate information to communicate to the public.
- The opposition is not functioning in good faith. It is acting as though it should still be in power.

² The delegation comprised Claude-Gerard Marcus, honorary member of the French parliament; Jean Lavoie, former NDI Bosnia parliamentary resident program director; Shauna Martin, Republika Srpska parliamentary program director; Paul Rowland and Stephanie Lynn, Serbia resident program directors; Jovan Tatić and Ana Radicević Serbia program coordinators; and Damian Murphy, Washington-based Serbia program officer.

- There does not appear to be a coordinated strategy to communicate government decisions to the public. This lack of information could prove detrimental to DOS' public support as the coalition continues the reform process.
- The DOS caucus has an internal set of checks and balances, but the legislative decision-making process appears to be driven by the leadership and does not incorporate the opinions of individual MPs. This could engender problems within the coalition as the reform process continues.
- The government and parliaments lack critical human, technical, research and material resources during this period of reform. Additionally, many MPs lack experience in governing and legislating, a challenge compounded by the numerous roles assumed by several MPs.

Based on experience gained through several parliamentary programs in emerging democracies throughout the world, NDI will seek to engage members of parliament in building enhanced communication links among ministries and legislatures as well as between MPs and citizens. NDI may also seek out opportunities to provide technical assistance to the MPs on drafting legislation and developing the parliament's committee structure.

In June, NDI began to meet with a group of international organizations engaged in parliamentary programming to ensure coordination of efforts. Among the groups represented were the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Political Party Program

Communication with Citizens and Party Building

Contact Serbia

In 2000, with USAID funding, NDI assisted the Alliance for Change in establishing a network of offices throughout Serbia to communicate with prospective voters. DOS in turn used these offices as the coalition of democratic forces grew. Upon opposition electoral victories in 2000, newly elected leaders sought to maintain contact with their constituents and use these offices as vehicles to communicate with citizens. DOS submitted and NDI approved a proposal on that basis. These offices, now called Contact Serbia, have branches in Belgrade, Bujanovac, Sombor, Novi Sad, Valjevo, Zajecar, Uzice and Cacak. NDI conducted training with office staff on how to properly serve the needs and requests of citizens.

In June, 24 participants - both coordinators and office managers - from 19 of the 21 Contact Serbia towns met with Diane Cromer, U.S. communications expert, for a day-long training session on strategic planning, citizen outreach and message development. The objective of the session was to encourage participants to view their role as instrumental to the government's full program and to understand that they must follow through on a constituent's request from start to finish. Coupled with exercises on message development and planning, NDI

presented various processes, such as creating systems of request intake, recording data and developing creative methods of using the office for voter education.

DOS Consultations

In June, Cromer conducted a series of consultations with DOS leaders, including Yugoslav Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic, Yugoslav Minister of Ethnic and National Communities Rasim Ljajic, Minister of Labor and Employment Dragan Milovanovic and the staff of Yugoslav Justice Minister Vladan Batic. These consultations dealt primarily with public communication and strategy. Much of their communication to the public includes “negative” themes, alluding to a lack of time or resources to effect positive reform promised during the 2000 campaigns. Cromer led the leaders through exercises that helped to refocus their messages to address progress achieved in the nascent stages by this new government, while acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead. Cromer suggested several methods to communicate to the public through events and public appearances.

Chiefs of Staff Training

Cromer conducted consultations with five chiefs of staff from the Federal Ministry of Interior, Republic Ministry of Labor and Employment, Federal Ministry of Ethnic and National Communities, Speaker of the Federal Parliament and Ministry of Telecommunications. They shared their initial sense of being overwhelmed with tasks – whether they were opening a new ministry or taking over a well-established one – and the surprising lack of professionalism and sense of responsibility amongst civil servants. NDI led the participants through an exercise to map out achievements during the past six or eight months in office. Participants expressed a need for on-going training on networking, management skills, communicating with voters, articulating the governments’ message, different methods of responding to citizen requests or complaints and other topics.

Communications Training with Young MPs

In April, Mark Webster, U.S. public relations specialist, trained six young DOS MPs on communication techniques. The participants developed nine ways in which they could enhance their communications techniques in linking youth constituents with the new parliamentary bill on privatization.

During the period, NDI also met with members of youth sections to assess how NDI can respond to their training needs. NDI visited with the League of Democrats of Vojvodina and Reformists of Vojvodina, youth MPs, Serbia’s Youth Council, DOS youth activists plus the youth sections of the Movement for a Democratic Serbia, Civic Alliance of Serbia, the Democratic Party of Serbia, Demochristians, League of Democrats of Vojvodina, Reformists of Vojvodina, New Democracy, New Serbia and Social Democratic Union.

Fundraising Training

In May, NDI conducted a training session on political party fundraising with more than 25 staff members from DOS headquarters. While greeted with initial skepticism, participants devised innovative letter writing campaigns and events to raise funds for DOS. This training is a precursor to future NDI training with local party branches through the regional trainer program and provides a logical step toward building longer-term sustainability within political parties.

Regional Training Program

NDI expanded its regional trainer team from 12 to 22 political party trainers throughout the country. During the quarter, NDI conducted orientation sessions for the 10 new regional trainers who come from the following parties: New Democracy, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Sandzak Democratic Party, Socialdemocracy, Social Democratic Union, and Democratic Alternative. In May, NDI conducted training with the regional trainers on political party membership development: why people join parties, how to organize a membership drive, determining the benefits of party membership, the importance of membership lists and the importance of contributing financially to the party through membership dues. In June, the regional trainers replicated this training for 589 political party activists at the local level.

Local Political Party Branch Training

In June, NDI regional trainers trained 589 political party activists from local branches of DOS member parties on activities between elections, including membership development, scheduling and event planning. The training was conducted on a single-party basis in the following 36 towns: Leskovac, Kragujevac, Kikinda, Valjevo, Kraljevo, Novi Sad, Bor, Majdanpek, Nis, Pozarevac, Zrenjanin, Vranje, Cacak, Sabac, Sremska Palanka, Novi Pazar, Novi Beograd, Sremska Mitrovica, Sombor, Backa Palanka, Krusevac, Prijepolje, Negotin, Brus, Prokuplje, Nova Varos, Becej, Ruma, Loznica (Belgrade), Vozdovac (Belgrade), Raska, Jagodina, Subotica, Pancevo, Kladovo and Uzice.

Local Councilor Training

In April, NDI Regional Trainers conducted sessions in more than 30 towns for more than 250 local councilors and their volunteer teams on effective methods of communication with citizens, including press releases, newsletters and leaflets. More than 30 local councilors conducted surveys in their constituencies. The results of the surveys showed that citizens are pleased to have an opportunity to be heard by their locally elected officials, have concerns about local issues and want to have input into local government decisions.

Regional Trainer Party Building Exercises

NDI regional trainers established two fundraising teams to experiment with techniques in approaching low and high donors. This project is being implemented in preparation for future training with local party branches. The low donor team is conducting a 50-50 raffle drawing at a party to raise funds for a small DOS party. This group is also conducting a small direct mail

effort with phone follow-up to local business owners to request funds to purchase a fax machine for a DOS party. This machine would be used to coordinate a party-based effort to link local businesses that need employees with the unemployed in the community.

The large donor group has targeted the international community and is hosting a day to celebrate Serbian culture with a tour to two monasteries, a traditional village and lunch. The funds raised will support a humanitarian project in the region, a cultural heritage project and some operating costs for the DOS office.

Regional Trainers in Belarus

To assist its USAID-funded political party program in Belarus, NDI deployed three NDI regional trainers to Bialystok and Minsk in April and May to conduct trainings and consultations on party volunteers and door-to-door canvassing for more than 80 Belarussian democratic activists. The similarities between the current political situation in Belarus and the political activism under the Milošević regime allowed the Serbian trainers to credibly share experiences and effectively offer training to the Belarussian democratic activists.

Women Political Activism

Communications Training for Women City Councilors

Through four seminars in April, NDI trained 44 women city councilors in municipalities around Belgrade on skills to communicate with the public and within city government. Following is a breakdown of participants by party: the Democratic Party (20), Democratic Alternative (3), Demochristians (3), Democratic Party of Serbia (4), Democratic Center (4), New Democracy (3), Civic Alliance (3), the Social Democratic Union (1), Association of Free and Independent Unions (1), Movement for a Democratic Serbia (1) and Socialdemocracy (1).

In June, NDI replicated the communications training for 21 women city councilors from Vojvodina. This was the first time that women political activists traveled from outside of Belgrade to participate in a training with NDI.

In May, NDI conducted consultations with four women presidents of executive boards of municipalities from Cukarica (Democratic Alternative), Rakovica (Democratic Party), Vracar (Civic Alliance of Serbia) and Indija (Democratic Party of Serbia). This session on message development and presentation helped participants develop political strategies in communicating to their constituents.

Communications Training for Women MPs

In June, Diane Cromer, a U.S.-based political expert, conducted one-on-one consultations with the following women MPs:

- Anita Beretic, a Democratic Party MP from Sombor;
- Visnja Nezc, a League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina MP from Novi Sad;

- Gordana Comic, a deputy speaker of the Republic Parliament and Democratic Party MP from Novi Sad; and
- Natasa Milojevic, a Socialdemocracy MP from Belgrade.

The consultations assisted participants in outlining and practicing a personal message and using it effectively to articulate their political goals. Each participant was concrete about goals for gender equity and the need to take actions that could be felt directly by citizens in their everyday lives. In particular, the women cited education, child care and jobs for women as key issues around which to organize.

Media training provided the opportunity to work on specific language they could use to put forth their ideas. They, like their male counterparts, were inclined to use complex, institutional language during their initial presentation exercise in front of a camera. Over time, however, they began to hear the difference between talking to the citizens who would see the media piece versus dealing with the reporter or moderator as the audience.

In June, NDI Bulgaria Representative Ann Liston (U.S.) conducted communications training with three women MPs: Olgica Kircanski from Socialdemocracy, Zrenjanin; Ruzica Veljovic from New Democracy, Pancevo; and Neda Arneric from the Democratic Party, Belgrade. Liston reviewed political messaging, concrete development of individual messages and on-camera practice speaking.

Belgrade Open School

In May, NDI conducted training sessions for the Belgrade Open School, an organization that seeks to provide information on political topics to interested students and political party activists. The 48 participants, who attended sessions on proposal writing, how to train and fundraising, came from academia, the People's Party of Justice,³ Democratic Alternative, Democratic Party of Serbia and CeSID.

NDI Newsletter

In June, NDI released *Vesti (News)*, the first in a series of NDI Serbia newsletters for distribution to participants, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), political parties and the international community. This will be a useful tool in communicating the efforts of political party activists throughout Serbia and sharing information on NDI's program.

The Center for Free Elections and Democracy

Communications Training for Regional Coordinators

In April, U.S. public relations specialist Mark Webster trained CeSID regional coordinators on communication techniques and encouraged the group to assess its current activities and identify the communications components of each. He reviewed message development techniques and conducted a session on effective press conferences and newsletters.

³ An off-shoot of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), formed after the September 2000 elections.

Strategic Planning

In May, NDI conducted a strategic planning session with CeSID in order to assist the organization in clarifying its goals and objectives, evaluating its structure and decentralization, planning for the next year and determining NDI's role in CeSID's development. From this meeting, CeSID identified several functional and administrative areas where the Institute could provide technical assistance in the future.

Also in May, NDI conducted consultations with CeSID's headquarters staff on diversifying the organization's donor base for future sustainability. This session was complemented by a training for 20 CeSID branch coordinators that emphasized the importance of solid communication mechanisms and the benefits of soliciting proposal ideas from its grassroots activists throughout the country.

Cooperation with Regional Election Monitoring Organizations

NDI facilitated CeSID contact with domestic monitoring organizations from Bulgaria (Bulgarian Association for Free Elections), Albania (Society for Democratic Culture), Montenegro (Center for Democratic Transitions), Kosovo (KACI) and Belarus. In June, CeSID sent election observation delegations to cooperate with NDI partners in Bulgaria and Albania for those countries' respective parliamentary elections.

VI. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the period, NDI saw significant progress toward accomplishing the following program objectives as set out in its April to September 2001 workplan:

Objective: Train party caucuses in parliament and elected local officials to seek out and take into account constituent interests as they handle legislative affairs.

- Eight Democratic Opposition of Serbia "Contact Serbia" offices began providing constituency services.
- In March, more than 30 city councilors engaged citizens' input through surveys after NDI's training on communications with citizens and a specific session on surveys.
- Based on NDI training, Niš city government developed a common constituency outreach survey for use by all councilors.
- The city of Niš decided to distribute monthly newsletters to citizens after constituency outreach sessions with NDI regional trainers.
- Based on NDI training, Civic Alliance of Serbia decided to do one newsletter for all its councilors going door-to-door to use in their constituencies.
- Based on NDI training, a local councilor in Pancevo successfully delivered more than 1,200 surveys, one for every household in her constituency.
- Based on NDI training, the mayor of Vrsac conducted a survey in his own constituency, encouraging several other councilors to follow suit.

Objective: Enable political parties to consider longer-term strategic development

- NDI program participants in a 2000 World Learning program indicated that their U.S. study mission helped them accomplish the following:
 - Develop key strategic tools for the 2000 election cycle;
 - Share communication techniques with their campaign teams upon their return;
 - Manage a thorough reporting from polling stations on election night; and
 - Develop a youth center in Belgrade for their party.

Objective: Facilitate CeSID's organizational development, election monitoring initiatives, and government watchdog activities.

- CeSID's Leskovac office produced and distributed a newsletter to 600 volunteers as a follow-up to NDI's training.
- CeSID refined its mission statement after consultations with NDI.
- CeSID monitored parliamentary elections in Albania through cooperation with NDI's former partner, the Society for Democratic Culture.

Unexpected results

NDI regional trainers are recognized in a variety of circles for their abilities:

- Aleksandra Knez-Milojkovic participated in a STAR Steps training of trainers program to work with women in the NGO, trade union and political party sectors.
- Nebojsa Andric was approached by the Democratic Party (DS) to conduct a series of political party development training sessions in Serbia with other DS trainers.
- Nenad Simovic was asked by a local Citizens' Forum to be a lead trainer in eight surrounding towns and villages near Uzice.

V. EVALUATION

In order to enable political parties to consider long-term development, NDI conducted consultations and training with three DOS leaders, five chiefs of staff, hundreds of political party activists and nearly 1,000 local councilors throughout Serbia. During consultations, NDI encouraged DOS leaders to create an overall communications strategy where each party should adapt its messages accordingly. Currently, strategic planning is difficult for DOS leaders and activists as many are engaged full time in the reform process. NDI encouraged the use of strategic planning techniques because, if used properly, they can be a time saving measure. NDI will continue to monitor the progress of political party leaders as they develop long-term strategies and communicate them to party activists.

NDI made substantial progress in providing elected officials with the skills and facilities to communicate better with voters. Even at this early stage, some of these officials have begun to utilize these methods and have sought to engage citizens more democratically in the decision-

making process through surveys, newsletters and constituency canvassing. These developments set a positive precedent for these newly elected officials in how they approach their positions and relate to citizens in Serbia.

Since NDI has not formally began its parliamentary programming this program objective does not yet fully apply, but the opening of the Contact Serbia constituency relations offices is the first step towards facilitate greater communication between elected officials and citizens.

During the period, NDI enhanced its programming related to increased women's participation in politics by providing 76 women with communication and leadership skills building. Several women used this training to concretely reach out to citizens through newsletters and surveys. NDI also sought to build informal networks among women political leaders and activists so that they have opportunities to interact and share their experiences during Serbia's democratic transition.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In the coming quarter, NDI anticipates the following activities:

- Deploying resident representative to conduct NDI's parliamentary program;
- Continuing training with local government officials on constituency outreach; and
- Opening Contact Serbia offices in Zrenjanin, Subotica, Jagodina, Leskovac, Vranje, Pirot, Sabac and Kraljevo.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

1. Parliamentary Assessment Report, May 2001
2. NDI "Vesti" Newsletter
3. Regional Trainer List
4. Testimonials from NDI program participants

Testimonials from NDI program participants

Past training with Local Councilors

This training reminded me I shouldn't forget about my voters.

- Civic Alliance Party, Krusevac

I'm thankful for the new knowledge in political marketing, for exchange of experience and for the interactive approach in your trainings.

- Independent Cacak

Your support is crucial. NDI is not forgetting about councilors and offers further professional help.

- Democratic Party, Jagodina

The selection of hand-outs on trainings is great, adjusted to our needs and situation in Serbia. It can serve to encourage the initiative for actions in the field.

- New Democracy, Kraljevo

I am grateful for your patient effort to improve the democratic processes in this country that you've been showing for years.

- Democratic Party, Pancevo

Women Communication Training

The most useful aspect was the experience of gaining confidence and believing in myself... We should have more regular communications trainings because they are very useful and motivational... NDI seminars are the most complex and the most effective.

Wonderful, extraordinary get-together, getting to know women councilors from other municipalities... Trainers were experts, they influenced us positively, encouraged us and helped us overcome the fear of the camera.

I needed this kind of education earlier; but it is never too late...Real problems were stressed, our biggest fears were discussed by professionals, who tried to bring out the best in us, insisting on a positive approach.

The most useful part of the seminar was realizing that public speaking and speeches are nothing terrible. Also, that in spite of being the youngest, I am able to do political public speaking well. This training also helped me overcome an identity crisis... I loved this training so much that I cannot even come up with positive criticism, I cannot see any faults... Of course I would participate again. I have a wish to learn as much as possible about democracy, meaning that what NDI does, I want to learn! Organization was excellent. We need this education a lot. Western principles and the experience of applying them in Serbia = excellent combination.

Contact Serbia Training

It will be needed to maintain regular contacts with the people who worked on this project, to share experience... (The most important aspect was) the new knowledge in communication with citizens and involving us and making us feel part of the real democratization of Serbia.

- Jelena Beloberkovic, Kraljevo